

not have to compete with cheaper versions from the developing world. In certain industries, like garments and sporting goods, however, low wages can pose a threat to American workers. In Haiti, for example, workers who stitch T-shirts for one major American company earn about 26 cents an hour.

Low wages are not the only problem. Indentured labor still exists in some parts of the world, where workers commit to work for someone for a set amount of time, often for less than the prevailing wage, in exchange for a guarantee of a job that pays subsistence wages. Millions of workers also toil under conditions where their health is endangered and their lives threatened. Unsanitary and unsafe conditions are a common sight in Third World "sweatshops".

Child labor can also be a problem. In some developing countries, children under 12 are made to work long hours for sub-standard wages under hazardous conditions, allowing them little for rest and no time for school. The Geneva-based International Labor Organization (ILO) says there are between 100 and 200 million workers under the age of 12 worldwide.

Yet the ILO suggests that while the majority of these children are mistreated and underpaid, they would likely be worse off if child labor was eliminated without a corresponding improvement in the overall economic condition of the countries in which they live. Some Third-World governments see no political advantage in improving working conditions or banning child labor, but trying to punish those governments often means punishing their guiltless citizens by throwing them out of work.

Goods on American Shelves: Hoosiers do not want to provide a market for goods produced by the sweat and toil of mistreated workers. Yet many of the products made by low-wage earners end up in American homes. Because of their low prices, consumers here may unknowingly buy brand-name toys, clothes, and running shoes made by abused workers. In doing so, we may be supporting "sweatshop" conditions we find abhorrent.

One suggestion which has gained considerable support is an effort to get responsible employers to create a labeling system for goods produced without child or exploited labor. This would go a long way in helping U.S. consumers make informed choices.

Buying goods from countries which treat workers fairly helps build their economies and makes them strong trading partners. On a human level, it raises workers' incomes in those countries, giving them a higher standard of living, and allowing them to start buying American-made goods.

While there is no consensus, "internationally recognized workers' rights" tend to include the following: the right to form and join labor unions; the right to bargain collectively; a prohibition against forced labor; a minimum age for child workers; a minimum wage; a maximum workday and workweek; occupational safety; and freedom from discrimination.

Thanks to the Fair Labor Standards Act and enforcement by the Department of Labor, American workers enjoy most of these rights. But things are not perfect here at home, as reports of TV personalities lending their names unknowingly to products made in "sweatshops" illustrate. While we are better-off than most countries, child labor and the exploitation of workers continue to be problems in America.

Possible Legislation: Last session, Congress considered various measures to help protect the standards that American workers enjoy, and to help improve the lot of workers worldwide. They included: a bill to beef up enforcement of federal labor laws

aimed at combatting sweatshops in the U.S.; a bill to ban trade in products made by children; a recommendation for a code of conduct for U.S. companies manufacturing abroad; and a measure linking foreign aid to advancements in workers' rights. However, none of these proposals became law. We still have a long way to go.

One strategy the Administration has been pursuing is to encourage countries to grant their workers greater labor protection in return for better trading opportunities with the U.S. Since the 1970s, our trade regulations have aimed to encourage dealings with countries which support strong workers' rights. I believe labor conditions should always be on the table when we negotiate trade deals.

This approach has its obvious advantages, and has had encouraging results. For example, prior to the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mexico was not enforcing many of its guaranteed workers' rights. The side agreements to NAFTA required the signatories to protect their own workers' rights, and the situation in Mexico has since improved.

Conclusion: I remain confident in American workers' ability to compete because of our high productivity and the quality of our products. At the same time, we need to keep the pressure on countries which treat their workers unfairly, and continue to encourage improvements in working conditions.

America cannot demand that companies in developing countries pay their workers what we pay ours, but we can demand that basic worker rights are recognized and that children are protected. Paying low wages gives the Third World a competitive advantage; treating workers badly is unfair to them and unfair to us.

Fair trading is crucial to the world economy and to America's leading role in it. As labor rights take hold worldwide, America's trading position will improve, because countries that cannot exploit their workers will be forced to sell their goods for higher fairer prices.

SALUTE TO THE EFFORTS OF HOSANNA INDUSTRIES, INC.

HON. RON KLINK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 1997

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the First Presbyterian Church of Bakerstown, PA, and its mission Hosanna Industries, Inc. This remarkable organization, led by executive director Donn Ed, has offered and delivered its construction services to over 340 structures in my district and across the United States.

Founded in 1990, Hosanna Industries, Inc. has donated labor, materials, and faith to victims of impoverishment and disaster. Dedicated to helping whenever the need arises, Hosanna epitomizes the community involvement needed to make the world a better place.

It is with great pride that I approach the House of Representatives today to commend Hosanna Industries on their most recent endeavor. Reaching out in a time of crisis to help heal the wounds of a heinous crime, Hosanna Industries will be traveling to the rural Arkansas town of Chelford to rebuild the St. Mark's Missionary Baptist Church. Their church destroyed by arson, St. Mark's members have

been without their place of worship since November 1995. With the help of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ, 15 missionaries from Hosanna Industries will travel to Tyronza, AR, on March 16 to begin a 9-day quest to rebuild St. Mark's Church in time for their Easter celebration.

As Members of Congress, we can legislate against the burning, desecrating, and destruction of religious property, but our strongest weapon against the purveyors of hatred is the strength of the people in groups like Hosanna Industries and their search to expose the goodness of man.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Hosanna Industries for their past and future efforts. In the words of project coordinator Mike Killian, "you bring light where there is dark and love where there is bitterness." Your spirit, faith, and peaceful offerings are a true commitment to the people of not only your worship community but also your congressional district and the United States of America. On behalf of all the Members of Congress, I thank you for all you have done to make right, the wrongs of society. Your contributions have not gone unnoticed.

TRIBUTE TO THE EASTERN FAIRFAX ALL-STARS

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 1997

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I would like to applaud the Eastern Fairfax All-Stars for the terrific job they did marching in the inaugural parade. This is a group of very talented high school students attending Mount Vernon and West Potomac High Schools in the Eighth District of Virginia.

These two high school bands represent the very best of our youth. They overcame big odds, and working together, they performed at their very best. These students practiced during the weekends and winter vacation in sub-freezing temperatures. We, in the Eighth District, are very proud of them.

Of course, the performance of these students is also due to the efforts of their dedicated and caring band directors, Mr. Steve Rice of West Potomac and Jack Elgin of Mount Vernon. Both of these gentlemen also took their vacation time and weekends to help these students achieve the performance level they needed for the inaugural parade.

Finally, I would like to commend the students' families, the school's administrators, and the entire community for their part in helping these young people. Thank you for all you have done.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BERGEN-PASSAIC ARC

HON. MARGE ROUKEMA

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 26, 1997

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Association for Retarded Citizens of Bergen-Passaic Counties Inc., on its 50th anniversary. The event will be marked with a